

105TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2574

To consolidate certain mineral interests in the National Grasslands in Billings County, North Dakota, through the exchange of Federal and private mineral interests to enhance land management capabilities and environmental and wildlife protection, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 29, 1997

Mr. POMEROY introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Resources

A BILL

To consolidate certain mineral interests in the National Grasslands in Billings County, North Dakota, through the exchange of Federal and private mineral interests to enhance land management capabilities and environmental and wildlife protection, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. EXCHANGE OF CERTAIN MINERAL INTERESTS**

4 **IN BILLINGS COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA.**

5 (a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to direct
6 the consolidation of certain mineral interests in the Little
7 Missouri National Grasslands in Billings County, North

1 Dakota, through the exchange of Federal and private min-
2 eral interests in order to enhance land management capa-
3 bility and environmental and wildlife protection.

4 (b) EXCHANGE.—Notwithstanding any other provi-
5 sion of law—

6 (1) if, not later than 45 days after the date of
7 enactment of this Act, Burlington Resources Oil &
8 Gas Company (referred to in this Act as “Bur-
9 lington” and formerly known as Meridian Oil Inc.),
10 conveys title acceptable to the Secretary of Agri-
11 culture (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”)
12 to all oil and gas rights and interests on lands iden-
13 tified on the map entitled “Billings County, North
14 Dakota, Consolidated Mineral Exchange—November
15 1995”, by quitclaim deed acceptable to the Sec-
16 retary, the Secretary shall convey to Burlington,
17 subject to valid existing rights, by quitclaim deed, all
18 Federal oil and gas rights and interests identified on
19 that map; and

20 (2) if Burlington makes the conveyance under
21 paragraph (1) and, not later than 180 days after the
22 date of enactment of this Act, the owners of the re-
23 maining non-oil and gas mineral interests on lands
24 identified on that map convey title acceptable to the
25 Secretary to all rights, title, and interests in the in-

1 terests held by them, by quitclaim deed acceptable to
2 the Secretary, the Secretary shall convey to those
3 owners, subject to valid existing rights, by exchange
4 deed, all remaining Federal non-oil and gas mineral
5 rights, title, and interests in National Forest System
6 lands and National Grasslands identified on that
7 map in the State of North Dakota as are agreed to
8 by the Secretary and the owners of those interests.

9 (c) LEASEHOLD INTERESTS.—As a condition prece-
10 dent to the conveyance of interests by the Secretary to
11 Burlington under this Act, all leasehold and contractual
12 interests in the oil and gas interests to be conveyed by
13 Burlington to the United States under this Act shall be
14 released, to the satisfaction of the Secretary.

15 (d) EQUAL VALUATION OF OIL AND GAS RIGHTS EX-
16 CHANGE.—The values of the interests to be exchanged
17 under subsection (b)(1) shall be deemed to be equal.

18 (e) APPROXIMATE EQUAL VALUE OF EXCHANGES
19 WITH OTHER INTEREST OWNERS.—The values of the in-
20 terests to be exchanged under subsection (b)(2) shall be
21 approximately equal, as determined by the Secretary.

22 (f) LAND USE.—

23 (1) EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT.—The
24 Secretary shall grant to Burlington, and its succes-
25 sors and assigns, the use of Federally-owned surface

1 lands to explore for and develop interests conveyed
2 to Burlington under this Act, subject to applicable
3 Federal and State laws.

4 (2) SURFACE OCCUPANCY AND USE.—Rights to
5 surface occupancy and use that Burlington would
6 have absent the exchange under this Act on its in-
7 terests conveyed under this Act shall apply to the
8 same extent on the federally owned surface estate
9 overlying oil and gas rights conveyed to Burlington
10 under this Act.

11 (g) ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR ENVIRON-
12 MENTALLY SENSITIVE LANDS.—All activities of Bur-
13 lington, and its successors and assigns, relating to explo-
14 ration and development on environmentally sensitive Na-
15 tional Forest System lands, as described in the “Memo-
16 randum of Understanding Concerning Certain Severed
17 Mineral Estates, Billings County, North Dakota”, exe-
18 cuted by the Forest Service and Burlington and dated No-
19 vember 2, 1995, shall be subject to the terms of the memo-
20 randum.

21 (h) MAP.—The map referred to in subsection (b)
22 shall be provided to the Committee on Energy and Natural
23 Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources
24 of the House of Representatives, kept on file in the office
25 of the Chief of the Forest Service, and made available for

1 public inspection in the office of the Forest Supervisor of
2 the Custer National Forest within 45 days after the date
3 of enactment of this Act.

4 (i) CONTINUATION OF MULTIPLE USE.—Nothing in
5 this Act shall limit, restrict, or otherwise effect the appli-
6 cation of the principle of multiple use (including outdoor
7 recreation, range, timber, watershed, and fish and wildlife
8 purposes) in any area of the Little Missouri National
9 Grasslands. Federal grazing permits or privileges in areas
10 designated on the map entitled “Billings County, North
11 Dakota, Consolidated Mineral Exchange—November
12 1995” or those lands described in the “Memorandum of
13 Understanding Concerning Certain Severed Mineral Es-
14 tates, Billings County, North Dakota”, shall not be cur-
15 tailed or otherwise limited as a result of the exchange au-
16 thorized by this Act.

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